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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 003060

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SUBJECT: NINEWA: VICE PM AL-ZAWBA'I'S SURPRISE VISIT TO
TALK TAL'AFAR

Classified By: Ninewa PRT Leader James Knight. Reasons: 1.4(b) and (d)

This is a Ninewa Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) message.

1. (C) Summary: Deputy Prime Minister Salam al-Zawba'i made an unexpected trip to Mosul 16 August to discuss Tal'afar issues with Ninewa Governor Kashmoula at the FOB Marez East (ex-Diamondback) MWR facility ('Palm Palace'). The DPM's trip was coordinated almost entirely through Iraqi channels, and was apparently prompted by Iraqi Islamic Party (IIP) complaints to al-Zawba'i about treatment of Tal'afar internally displaced persons (IDPs) now in Mosul and police arrangements in Tal'afar. Ninewa Governor Kashmoula and Provincial Council Chair Issa joined to successfully defend the Governor's encouragement of IDPs from Tal'afar to return home and the composition of Tal'afar's police force. End summary.

2. (C) Al-Zawba'i was accompanied by nearly 30 staff and security personnel; Kashmoula was joined by his personal staff, Provincial Council Chair Issa, and a number of Ninewa Directors General. Two IIP/Ninewa officers and Mosul's IIP member on the Council of the Representatives, Noor al-Din al-Rahani, joined proceedings a half hour after they began. Team Leader and most senior PRT staff were also present.

3. (C) Governor Kashmoula was notified by DPM al-Zawba'i of his intended visit late 15 Aug, and early 16 August urgently requested PRT assistance to meet the DPM at Mosul airfield (MAF) on FOB Marez East and provide a meeting venue on the FOB, given fighting underway in Mosul following the suicide VBIED attack on Mosul's Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) office the previous day. DPM al-Zawba'i and party eventually arrived at MAF at 1430 on an Iraqi C-130, five hours later than originally promised. (Note: One of al-Zawba'i's staffers apologized for his late arrival, reporting that the delegation had been delayed attempting to enter Baghdad International Airport. End note.)

4. (C) Al-Zawba'i opened the meeting with a long and poetic review of the Islamic tenets of charity and tolerance, ending with an urgent plea for Mosul to avoid the sectarian violence now wracking Baghdad. Al-Zawba'i then segued into concerns that those Islamic values are not evident in the treatment Tal'afar IDPs are receiving in Mosul. He also insisted that Tal'afar residents must be assured of adequate security before they return to their homes. (Note: This point reflected Governor Kashmoula's

televised announcement last week that IDPs from Tal'Afar should return there immediately. We understand this directive will be enforced by ending food distributions in Mosul to holders of Tal'Afar ration cards. End note.)

15. (C) Governor Kashmoula effectively countered the DPM's assessment, insisting that Tal'Afar is now secure. He emphasized that insurgents now sowing terror in Mosul are former residents of Tal'Afar, and use IDP status to conceal their activities. Kashmoula pointed out that the return of Tal'Afar IDPs to their homes will expose these insurgents.

16. (C) Al-Zawba'i then asked about police forces in Tal'Afar, and questioned the low number of Sunni police officers in service there. IIP representatives echoed al-Zawba'i's remarks, complaining that Tal'Afar police do not reflect its Sunni population. Provincial Council Chair Issa responded that Tal'Afar is far more secure than Mosul, and that security problems there suffer from a lack of adequate intelligence. Governor Kashmoula riposted that Sunnis had not volunteered in sufficient numbers, then directly challenged the IIP members present to present him a list of 500 names of Sunnis available for recruitment into the Tal'Afar police. IIP representatives did not respond, but dropped the subject.

17. (C) IIP representatives then tried to arrange the DPM's travel to IIP offices in Mosul to meet a delegation from Tal'Afar waiting there. Governor Kashmoula pointed out that security conditions -- in

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particular, ongoing fighting precipitated by the PUK office bombing the day before -- would not allow the DPM to safely travel off the FOB. After extended debate al-Zawba'i concurred, and he and his party boarded his aircraft to depart for Baghdad.

18. Comment: Governor Kashmoula was clearly unhappy at the necessity to attend this meeting -- he had an urgent appointment in Erbil that evening -- but dealt with al-Zawba'i's accusations and IIP maneuvering with great skill. The support offered to the Governor by Provincial Council Chair Issa was also effective -- and notable in view of the rivalry more usually evident between them.

19. Comment continued: At a meeting with the PRT Leader the following day, Kashmoula indicated that the IIP Council of the Representatives member from Tal'Afar had phoned al-Zawba'i the day before to complain about conditions in Tal'Afar, and thereby precipitated this meeting. (Note: He did not attend. End note.) If so, this IIP effort to weaken Kashmoula appears to have failed -- he did not change his position on the return of Tal'Afar IDPs, and IIP complaints about Sunni representation on Tal'Afar's police force evaporated in the face of his challenge to produce Sunni recruits. A further indication that al-Zawba'i's efforts backfired was strident gossip criticizing the DPM's 'uninformed and intrusive' intervention which dominated conversation at the Ninewa Provincial Council's 20 August meeting. End comment.
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